LABOUR MONTHLY

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NEW HORIZONS

The Editor

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PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

D. N. Pritt

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The Warren Report: Ivor Montagu
Soviet Interpretation of Profit: Y. Liberman
Politics of Torture: H. Bernstein
Trade Union Education: J. R. Shanley

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Two Shillings

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Notes of the Month

NEW HORIZONS

If you follow up the history of British elections for a century past or longer, you are tempted to ask, not why British parliaments were so bad, but on the contrary, how they managed to be even as good as they were, and to represent as much as they did, though in a dim refraction, the actual movement of British society.

KARL MARX, New York *Daily Tribune*, September 4, 1852.

October 18, 1964

We are entering a new period, not only in Britain, but in the world situation. This became clear to all at the very moment of the declaration of the polls, when the announcement of major new developments in other leading countries coincided with the major political shift in Britain. During the progress of an election a curtain appears to descend upon the country involved, as public attention inevitably becomes concentrated on the internal issues of dispute between the contending parties and the choice of a future government. But scarcely had the doors of the polling booths closed than a series of thunderclaps of new events in other leading countries, entirely unconnected with the British election, compelled awareness of the realities of the world situation within which British policy has to operate. The simultaneous occurrence of the fall of the Tory Government in Britain, and its replacement by a Labour Government; of the change of the top leadership in the Soviet Union; and of the explosion of the first Chinese atom bomb; this simultaneous occurrence has struck the imagination of all. At the same time within the United States the Presidential election has revealed the direct challenge of the most openly aggressive, reactionary and militarist forces, the same which murdered Kennedy for his peace speeches and moves towards negotiation just before his death, having advanced to the stage of control of one of the two powerful party political machines, even though not yet to the stage of any immediate prospect of presidential power. Within West Germany after Adenauer the debate has come into the open between continuance of the old rigid policy or the beginning of some steps towards relaxation of East-West tension. Bound up with this is the crucial question of the menacing project of the multilateral nuclear force, on which President Johnson has demanded a decision before the end of the year. Thus on every

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side we are approaching moments of decision, equally in the international situation and in relation to the critical economic problems confronting Britain. In all these decisions Britain today, thanks to the verdict of the electorate, the new British Labour Government and the British people can play a key rôle.

Which Way?

In what direction are all these signs of change pointing? Can we look forward to some further steps towards the aims of peaceful co-existence? Can we entertain hopes of some steps to heal divisions and strengthen the unity, so indispensable for the world's future, of the international communist movement and of all the progressive forces of the world? Can we count on some steps, however limited, towards the beginning of a change in Britain's policies, both at home and abroad, for which the fall of the Tory Government at the hands of the electorate, however confused the conditions for the expression of their choice, has shown the demand, and which the situation so urgently requires? Or must we prepare rather for the alternative menacing possibilities which glare like dragons in the path against the advance of the people in the present situation? Must we assume as inevitable the extension of nuclear weapons to an ever widening range of countries, with the consequent multiplication of the occasions for an explosion? Will the instability of the narrow parliamentary majority in Britain play into the hands of a Tory counter-offensive to bring down the Government and force a rapid new election at an unfavourable moment? Must we prepare to withstand the onslaught of an economic offensive against the standards and conditions and wage demands of the working people, such as the orthodox prescription, as followed by all previous Governments, whether Tory or Labour, lays down as essential to meet the new twist in the deepening crisis of British imperialism? It would indeed be premature at this moment to lay down the long-term prospect of the answer to these critical questions which now arise before us. For the answer will depend on the action of the people, and not least in Britain.

Electoral Verdict

October 1964 will live in British political history alongside 1906, the year of the emergence of the Labour Party as a political force at the moment of the biggest recorded Tory defeat; 1924, the year of the first Labour Government, still on a minority basis in parlia-

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ment; and 1945, the year of the first Labour absolute parliamentary majority. Toryism has once again been defeated, after thirteen years of rule. A Labour Government has a second chance with a parliamentary majority, although this time a dangerously slender majority. The fall of the Tory Government is a reflection of the deepening crisis of British imperialism and the dissatisfaction of the people with the policies of the ruling class. But the electoral-parliamentary mirror, as often before, has provided a distorting mirror for the expression of the anger of the people. The more obvious distortions of representation were highlighted this time by the three million Liberal voters, or one-quarter of the Tory or Labour totals, receiving only nine seats, or less than one thirty-third of the Tory or Labour total of seats. Even this typical distortion of representation was underlined by the still more glaring absurdity that this party, which is most characteristically representative of some sections of the urban intelligentsia, professional people and smaller business interests, should only have secured even this limited parliamentary representation almost entirely on a traditional territorial basis of what has been called 'the Celtic fringe' in the remotest rural underdeveloped areas. The Liberals also, however, were within the privileged closed circle, receiving more than their share of television time; and their leader ascribed their increased vote largely to this advantage. The Communists, on the other hand, with an effective alternative policy which did in fact answer the questions the people were presenting and voiced in concrete and practical shape their demands, were completely excluded from television, the main modern form of reaching the electorate, and were in this sense legally (or illegally) gagged, although their campaign undoubtedly helped the advance of the whole labour movement, and has provided an indispensable rallying basis for the fight in front.

Mechanical Indoctrination

For the mass of the electorate the essential choice, in accordance with the operation of this twisted electoral system, was presented not as a selection of the party and programme most closely corresponding to the given elector's own outlook and wishes, but as a rigidly limited choice between two Governments, a Tory Government or a Right-Wing Labour Government. Even this degree of choice was still further circumscribed and limited for the average elector by the large measure of bipartisan common ground on the most vital issues and consequent difficulty for the less politically

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informed to be certain of the distinction between the programmes offered. The dutiful eight to ten million electors (as against the few thousands attending meetings) subjected to compulsory television indoctrination every other evening—any escape to other programmes being cut off during these periods—of the official permitted orthodoxies, found themselves bombarded with an increasingly monotonous repetition of generalisations, platitudes, aspirations, exhortations and the most vague and shadowy indications of benevolent reforming aims unencumbered by any precision of concrete detail. They found themselves called on by both sides to vote for the 'modernisation' of Britain; to be 'dynamic'; to support 'planning'; to step up output to an annual 4 per cent increase; to balance Britain's accounts by a big exports drive; and to recognise the vital necessity of an 'incomes policy'.

Stifling Political Consciousness

No wonder that in these conditions, despite the critical character of this election, the vital importance of the real problems confronting the British people, and the universally testified extremely serious outlook and genuinely enquiring approach of the mass of the electors, so many of them should have declared themselves, after watching these television broadcasts, and believing they had received an authoritative presentation of the issues by the leading political figures and experts, to feel completely fogged and bewildered, unable to discover a clear distinction between the party programmes, and even sceptical of the existence of any real distinction. The low election aggregate vote of 77·3 per cent of the electorate revealed a decline of 1·4 per cent from 1959, and conspicuously contrasting with the high polls of 86 per cent in 1910 or 84 per cent in 1950. A Gallup poll in the midst of the election campaign, published in the *Daily Telegraph* on September 30, found that the proportion of electors declaring themselves to take 'little or no interest' in the election had risen from 16 per cent in 1959 to 26 per cent in 1964.

Responsibility for 'Apathy'

In answer to the query: 'Do you think that there is any really important difference between the parties or are they all much of a muchness?', no less than 49 per cent found the parties 'much of a muchness', in contrast to 34 per cent in 1959. This answer of virtually half the electorate revealed that even the existence of a basically different alternative programme and party had been successfully

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concealed from their knowledge. Even more significant was the proportion of answers to this query among those who stated themselves to be Conservative or Labour supporters. No less than 39 per cent of Conservative supporters declared themselves to find the parties 'much of a muchness'. And actually above this figure, 42 per cent of professed Labour supporters, according to this Gallup enquiry, found the parties 'much of a muchness'. This is certainly a startling measure of the existing political situation, precisely in the ranks of already aligned Labour supporters, who might have been expected to rally most enthusiastically to a really fighting programme against the Tories, the degree of scepticism of any important difference between the official programmes was actually higher than among the Tories. There could be no more damning condemnation of the effects of official right-wing policy in the labour movement. The high tide of popular anger against Toryism, which had shown itself at every testing during the preceding year, was reduced to a trickle. The swing to Labour none the less took place; but it was brought down to a very narrow margin indeed, with all the problems now arising therefrom.

Uneasy Balance

Thus a new and difficult political situation has developed. In place of the undoubted current of popular anger against Toryism and the record of Toryism during these recent years (extending in the latest period beyond working-class circles to considerable middle sections affected by all the difficulties of housing, rents, rates or the cost of living) finding reflection in an anti-Tory landslide comparable to 1906 or 1945, the parliament that has been elected has revealed an extreme uneasy balance with a Labour majority of only 4, or less than that of the short-lived second Attlee Ministry in 1950. The real confrontation of classes, of the handful of big landlords, financiers and monopolists, whose interests are represented by the Tory Party, against the overwhelming numbers of the working majority of the nation, is transmuted by the miraculous alchemy of the existing political system, including its weighted electoral machinery, monopolist control of the organs of mass information, and entrenched right-wing domination within the labour movement, into an apparently arithmetical equality of formally equal opposing armies. The most difficult conditions are thereby created for the ensuing Labour Government, which has simultaneously the most critical problems of Britain's immediate shaky economic situation, inherited from the

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preceding Tory Government, to tackle, and the weakest parliamentary basis for carrying through any effective action displeasing to the monopoly interests and Toryism.

Kind Advice from the Enemy

It is not surprising that the ruling organs of monopoly capitalism should seek to take advantage of this situation in order to pour out their kind of advice to the new Labour Government to adopt only such measures as can be agreed by the monopoly capitalist interests and the Tories (emergency salvaging steps in relation to the balance of trade and the balance of payments, 'incomes policy', etc.), and to postpone even those few limited innovating items of the already watered down electoral programme which could be regarded as 'controversial' (steel re-nationalisation, land commission, etc.).

> The corollary of this policy of sticking to essentials is that the Labour Government should detach itself, temporarily at least, from controversial irrelevances, such as the nationalisation of steel and the proposed land commission to acquire freeholds, and from long-term commitments such as 're-negotiation' of the Nassau agreement.
>
> (*The Times*, October 17, 1964.)

> With such a narrow majority, and with at least an occasional prospective need for Liberal support, Mr. Wilson may well be content to defer some of the most controversial and complicated measures, though even here a question mark hangs over steel nationalisation. We must hope that he will defer any crucial change in nuclear policy.
>
> (*Daily Telegraph*, October 17, 1964.)

Of course it is kind of the enemy to indicate so clearly what they do not want to see done. Such hints on where to strike the blow are always encouraging. And it is to the credit of Harold Wilson's initial statement immediately after the election that he made clear that he did not intend to be intimidated by the smallness of the majority, but would set the aim to go forward for the fulfilment of the whole electoral programme also on this basis.

Extra-Parliamentary Battle

The practical achievement of this objective, however, is more precarious, so long as the vision is confined only to the narrow arithmetic of the parliamentary chamber. It does not require the parliamentary experts to describe with loving exuberance the merely gymnastic difficulties of such a narrow majority: the ceaseless strain of attendance, the votes by ambulance, or the exclusion of Ministers from travelling unless the Tories prove co-operative. This is the

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manifest basis of Tory calculations for a not too distant come-back, once the Labour Government has been left to incur the unpopularity of the economic measures prescribed to retrieve the deficit left them as a legacy and rehabilitate capitalism, and once they have settled their own internal questions of leadership, now that Home has served his purpose (as anticipated in these Notes in November of last year, immediately after this appointment to succeed Macmillan) as fall-guy or scapegoat for the expected electoral defeat. All the experts are predicting a short life and early downfall for the new Government. Mr. Woodcock for the Trades Union Congress has predicted a new election within twelve months. No one can yet predict the next twelve months in the political scene in Britain. But such an outlook is the outlook of defeatism. The calculations of the enemy can be successfully routed, provided that the entire strength of the labour movement throughout the country is brought to bear. Such mobilisation of the support and active fighting demands of the labour movement throughout the country can give pause to the Tory manoeuvres, reinforce the narrowly balanced fight within parliament, and prepare the way, as the opportunities of by-elections arise, to strengthen the limited numbers within parliament. But this will only be possible provided that the measures and actions of the new Government from the outset are capable of arousing the enthusiasm and support of the broad labour movement and masses of the people throughout the country. The test of this will come at once with the method of handling the immediate economic crisis expressed in the deficit on the balance of payments.

Truth About the Deficit

Why is there this deficit on the balance of payments? The extent of it became revealed in the midst of the election campaign with the publication of the figures for the first half year, showing the biggest deficit since the war—bigger even than the previous record of 1947 which led to Cripps' austerity and the wage-freeze. A cold blast of material reality broke across the cosy make-believe of the first phase of the election campaign. During the first phase of the election campaign both sides competed in offering airy general phrases about 'modernisation', 'science', 'technology', 'planning', 'new frontiers', 'growth rates' and the rest of it. All in a kind of imaginary fairyland of a closed-in vacuum, as if Britain were a type of little isolated Sweden (held up by both sides as a model), and not primarily a world imperialist exploiting power, exploiting still one-quarter of the world

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in the economic and financial sphere of sterling, and with its real domestic economy and politics completely dominated by these world overseas exploiting interests, concentrated in the biggest monopolies (far bigger than the British manufacturing monopolies) and City financial houses. All these truths of Britain's position were kept duly hidden from the electorate. It is true that Home tried to brandish the bomb as the indispensable protection for the poor little vulnerable island against the assault of the wolves roaming the world outside; but the absurdity of this picture of the principal marauding power engaged in colonial wars thousands of miles from its shores could only arouse contempt. Wilson announced at the outset that he intended to fight the election on the domestic issues of the conditions of the people and their social needs. As if these domestic issues could be separated for one moment from the world imperialist role which governs the internal conditions within Britain as its metropolitan base, and exacts its imperious demands for man-power and resources (directly expressed in the titanic arms programme and ever rising overseas military expenditure) from the life and labour of the people to serve the interests of the big overseas exploiting monopolies, the real ruling financial oligarchy of Britain.

Guilty Silences

Then like a thunderclap the announcement, at the very end of September, of the record figures of the present deficit shattered the cosy idyll of the first phase of the election campaign. The deficit for the first half year showed a total of £341 million, equivalent to an annual total of £682 million, contrasting with the previous record of £443 million in 1947; and even the most moderate official prognostications anticipated a year's deficit of £500 million. It was revealed that the Tory Government was only tiding over by borrowing from central banks in the United States and Western Europe, and that the bills would have to be paid by the incoming Government after the election. This menacing situation inevitably became the centre of the election battle. But neither side dared for one moment to tell the electors the real truth of what was causing the deficit. The Tories spoke of high labour costs, wage increases, prosperity, affluence, excessive consumption and high living standards, lack of competitive efficiency, necessity for an exports drive, necessity for an incomes policy. Labour blamed Tory mismanagement, and thirteen years of 'Stop-Go' restrictive policies placing Britain in the rear of productive advance (strictly nineteen years, since the

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panic switch of the Attlee Government in the face of the deficit to Cripps' austerity and the wage-freeze was the first big example of the switchback process, and the fashionable formula of 'Stop-Go' to describe the succession of boom and crisis is really describing what used to be called capitalism). Labour offered as a solution modernisation, productive expansion, a big exports drive and an incomes policy. Only at the very end under pressure was it finally admitted that short-term measures such as borrowing and higher interest rates might in fact prove necessary. But neither side, nor any organ of the general press, would allow one hint to be made known to the people of the plain and inescapable real cause of the deficit.

Guilty Secret

The facts hidden from the public are quite plain and inescapable. Public discussion of the situation as presented by the politicians of either side, or by the broadcasters and journalists 'explaining' the problem in words of one syllable for the suckers, invariably offers a simple told-to-the-children picture of exports and imports. We are a small densely populated island. We have to import food and raw materials to live. To pay for them we have to export the goods we manufacture. But at present we are not exporting enough to pay for our imports. We are not paying our way. Therefore we must make a great effort to increase our exports to pay our way. And either Wilson or Maudling would then offer the standard homely picture of the national 'household' or 'family' failing to pay its way and in danger of becoming insolvent unless a great effort is made. What none of them will mention is that the deficit is entirely caused, not by the food and raw materials consumed in Britain, but by Government overseas expenditure, most of which is military. During the first half of 1964, Government overseas expenditure totalled £271 million, equivalent to an annual rate of £542 million, alongside the official estimate of an expected £500 million deficit for the year.

Letting the Cat Out of the Bag

The *Financial Times*, on September 30, being an organ produced solely for the use of financial circles, who are less interested in fairy-tales and prefer hard facts, and being in no danger of circulating among the wider masses to implant unsettling notions in their heads, was the only paper, other than the *Daily Worker*, which in the midst of the election humbug coolly analysed these facts and pointed out

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the conclusion:

> If there had been no Government expenditure abroad, in fact we would have been in comfortable surplus on current account and would have been virtually in balance overall. It is time we learned to cut our coat according to our cloth.

Of course the City does not make this exposure for love of the people at home, to save them from needless burdens and enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour. The City grudges the unproductive costs of the colossal overseas military expenditure, although the purpose of this is in fact to maintain their overseas financial interests, because the City desires the maximum amount for its own private overseas capital export, which already amounted to £168 million in the first half of this year or an annual rate of £336 million and thus further contributed to the deficit. The deficit is entirely a reflection of the imperialist structure of the British economy.

Hard Alternatives

What is the practical conclusion from this situation? The answer to this question will in fact govern the possibilities for social advance at home and the future of the new Labour Government. There are in reality only two alternatives. Either to 'cut our coat according to our cloth', in the admirable phrase of the *Financial Times*: that is, to cut the overseas waste government expenditure which causes the deficit, end the colonial wars, bring the troops home, and cease the military occupation of other people's countries all over the world. This would mean both to solve the deficit and release resources for the improvement of the conditions of the people, as well as diminish the burden of costs on manufacturing exports. Or, alternatively, to treat this overseas imperialist expenditure as sacred and inviolable, and not even a subject for discussion, and on this basis to demand new sacrifices of standards of the peoples at home in order to pay for the deficit and meet the costs of imperialism. The form of this may vary. At one time it may bear the classic forms of deflation and higher interest rates. At another time it may be devaluation, as by the Labour Government in 1949, with the consequent rise in prices cutting real wages. At another time it may be increased taxation on consumption, as by the use of the regulator of purchase tax. At another time it may be higher import tariffs, raising prices. At another time it may be a question of cuts in the programmes of development and expenditure of the social services. Always there is the aim to tie up the unions in wage restraint. Through all these and

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a hundred other forms the burdens of the costs of imperialism are thrown on the standards of the people, and frustrate the aims of social advance. This was the bitter experience of the Labour Government of 1945-51, with the transition from the initial phase of reforms, through Bevin, Fulton, soaring arms and overseas expenditure and the 1947 deficit, to the closing phase of the economic offensive against the working people, devaluation, austerity and the wage-freeze, and the consequent return of Toryism. Today this same basic dilemma is posed at the very outset by the crisis over the deficit on the balance of payments.

Increased Output Down the Drain?

It is no use trying to waive aside this dilemma with airy generalities about a prospective future increase of output and exports paying for everything and solving everything. When complaints are made that British manufacturing exports are insufficiently competitive and have lagged behind the rate of advance of rival capitalist exporting countries like West Germany, France, Italy or Japan, no allowance is made for the fact that none of these countries have the same volume of deadweight burdens as falls on British industry, represented by an arms programme of £2,200 million or aggregate debt interest of £1,342 million. The Labour election programme offered in very general terms some of the most urgent social measures of provision necessary for housing or pensions or health or education, although with a refusal of definite figures, even for the old age pension. In response to the questions of the probable costs, and how the costs would be met, the invariable answer was given that the costs would be met out of the 4 per cent increase in production which Labour was confident of being able to achieve. Incidentally, the same answer was given by the Tories for the means of paying for their electoral social promises. But now the facts of the deficit have brought the suggestion that any prospective increase in production will be in fact absorbed to meet the costs of the deficit:

> If the next Government is to put the balance of payments on an even keel, the necessary increase in exports or in domestic use of substitutes for imports would absorb a very large share of extra output coming from a whole year's growth of productivity. . . . If there were no squeeze in Government spending or private investment, this would mean no rise in consumption for practically a year. If Mr. Wilson comes to power, the action he may have to take to avert an external economic crisis could quickly re-establish Labour's image of the party of austerity and dreariness. (*Observer*, September 20, 1964.)

Thus Tory propaganda already calculates on this dilemma to dis-

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credit a Labour Government. But Tory propaganda is only able to calculate on this dilemma, because they assume that a Labour Government will maintain all the costs of overseas military expenditure and colonial wars and bases and armaments in the interests of imperialism, and will therefore be compelled to retreat on its social promises and throw the burdens on the people.

George Brown's Call for the Dunkirk Spirit

Already before the election campaign was over the dawning recognition of this grim prospect began to change the previously complacent tone of some of the more realist leading Labour spokesmen. In his speech at Doncaster on October 5 George Brown was reported to have said:

> In light of the fact that Britain is spending £500 million a year more than it is earning, the days of Santa Claus for grown-ups have to come to an end. We have to decide on October 15 whether we are going to opt for pretence or whether we are going to opt, as Britain did after Dunkirk, for tough policies, tough Ministers and long-term strategy to see us through.

Dunkirk? Is it to be 'blood, tears and sweat' again? A new call to tighten belts and for sacrifices? For the defence of Britain? Not at all. To pay for sending bombers against the Yemenis, tanks to Cyprus, helicopters and troops to Malaysia, or maintaining armed bases in Aden, Akrotiri and Singapore. Lest the innocent should be in any doubt against whom he proposes to be 'tough', he clarified his intention further in his speech on the same day at Leeds:

> If you ask me what I would want to achieve after October 15, it would be to be a member of a Government which, at whatever risk to achievement, and at whatever cost to immediate raising of standards, would again raise the flag of unselfishness.

'At whatever cost to immediate raising of standards'. Once again we hear the authentic notes of Bevin addressing the American Legion at the Savoy Hotel on September 10, 1947:

> My dear Americans, we may be short of dollars, but we are not short of will. . . . We won't let you down. . .
>
> Standards of life may go back. We may have to say to our miners and to our steel workers: 'We can't give you all we hoped for. We can't give you the houses we want you to live in. We can't give you the amenities we desire to give you.' But we won't fail.

But even Bevin did not offer these slogans for his election campaign. This time these menaces of 'toughness' in respect of 'standards' have appeared even before the election was over. 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?' You have been warned.

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Into the Fight

We have not yet at the time of writing the programme of the measures Harold Wilson and his Ministers may decide to adopt in order to meet the crisis of the deficit on the balance of payments. Their proposals will no doubt be known to readers by the time these lines appear. We should not attempt to anticipate or pre-judge these proposals. From one statement it would appear that even the old classic method of raising interest rates has not been ruled out, although the desire is obviously to find other methods, of which there are plenty in the recipe book of capitalism. But at the heart of all the various recipes is the so-called 'incomes policy', which is in reality the polite euphemism for wage restraint, since no successful way has yet been found of limiting profits, whatever the grandiose flourishing of taxation formulas. Every effort will no doubt be made to inveigle the unions into signing on the dotted line. But the whole experience of the working-class movement has taught the menace which this type of situation and its handling along orthodox capitalist lines by a Labour Government can bring, equally for the working class, and for the Labour Government. We remember 1931. We remember the fate of the 1945-51 Labour Government, and how that splendid majority was squandered. We do not want to repeat that experience. This time the majority is far narrower. Therefore the need is all the greater for the united rallying of the entire labour movement to carry forward the limited initial victory won at this election, to defeat any attempt at surrenders to the offensive of capitalism, and to press ahead the fight for the indispensable new policies which can alone bring a further stage of advance for the whole labour movement and open the way to a new future for Britain.

Parable of the Sybilline Books

When the Sibyl offered to King Tarquin the nine books of oracular wisdom, he refused, finding the price too high. She departed, and destroyed three, and years later returned to offer the remaining six for the same price. Once again Tarquin refused, finding the price too high. Once again the Sibyl departed, and destroyed a further three, and many years later returned to offer the last remaining three for the same price. This time, Tarquin, now desperate in his whole situation, bought the last three for the price for which he

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could have had the nine. In 1945 the people gave an overwhelming majority to Labour with a mandate for socialism and co-operation with the new socialist world. That majority, with which the full legislative means was opened to lead the people for the ending of monopoly capitalism and establishment of socialism, was squandered for the sake of imperialism. Today nineteen years later a second chance has come, with a far narrower majority or mandate at the outset. This time the chance must not be squandered. The fight goes forward.

R.P.D.

NEW TRENDS IN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A most interesting phenomenon of the present transition period . . . is the revolution in the Catholic Church. Even in the Vatican, this great medieval fortress, they begin to speak about socialism, and because of this the walls of St. Peter's do not collapse, the Borgias do not rise from their graves to anathematise the members of the ecumenical council and the Inquisition does not make fires to burn the heretics.

Is it a mere chance? Not at all. The Catholic church, with its experience not only of religious struggle, but with thousands of years' experience of political struggle, which saw the times of Roman patricians, which witnessed the rise and fall of feudalism and the development of capitalist society, cannot be mistaken in its appraisal of events changing the face of the world; it knows that the world is now living through a transition period and it wants to survive; it is adapting itself to the changes occurring with a terrific speed. On the other hand, it cannot remain indifferent to the indignation of the Catholic working masses, who believe in God but struggle against capitalist exploitation, taking an active part in the working class emancipation movement as one of its most active detachments.

If for us Communists, participation of the Catholic masses in the struggle for a world of social justice is of vast importance—and we are bending every effort to have friendly relations with them—so both now and during the future building of a democratic and socialist Spain, the key issue is that of fusing in one united movement all the Socialist, Anarchic, Social-Democratic and Communist trends we have in our country, on the basis, acceptable to the working people, of the movement for democracy and socialism.

Dolores Ibarruri (in an article in *Pravda*, October 8, 1964).

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PROBLEMS OF THE NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT

D. N. Pritt

THE problems facing the new Labour Government, with its tiny majority, are formidable.

The first main problem is that of solving the financial-economic crisis of the trade gap, which has been bequeathed to them by the Tories. The second is that of governing the country at all, with so small a majority. And the third, closely linked with the second, is how much of the programme on which the Labour Party fought the General Election can and should be carried through. These and other problems have to be faced and solved not just by the Government, but by the Labour M.P.s and the whole Labour movement.

They have moreover to be dealt with in the situation as it exists. If there were even one Communist M.P.; if the left wing of the Labour Party had greater power; if the Labour Party in the Election had sought a mandate to move the economy in a Socialist direction or even to abandon the armament policy and the support of Nato; then the whole situation might be very different; but in fact the Government consists of a pretty competent if not administratively experienced body of right-wing Social Democrats, asserting their ability to run the economy on capitalist lines, and to do so better than the Tories. The Labour M.P.s support the Government in that line, and the labour movement gives the same support, as to some elements because they are in agreement, and as to others because they recognise it as an indispensable condition precedent to the march towards a Socialist Britain that the Labour Government and Party be supported, as the only presently available means of defeating the political weapon of the ruling class, the Tory Party.

In studying these problems and the Government's prospects of solving them, one must realise that it has to fight not only the Tories —and most of the time the Liberals too—with the handicap of its small majority, but also the financial forces of the ruling class, loosely called the City, which can and will, when they dare, throw the economy into such confusion that the Government can be got rid of as was done in 1931; it may probably have to fight the civil service too, which can go a long way towards governing the country in Tory interests in spite of the best efforts of the Ministers. (The Government, itself part of the 'establishment', has to fight the establishment!)

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That is the setting in which the three main problems I have mentioned, and all other problems, have to be met. The first problem, that of the trade gap, is serious and urgent; it is due mainly to excessive armament and overseas expenditure, and has been rendered more serious and more urgent by deliberate Tory stalling for electoral purposes; and the government has barred itself in advance from adopting the true and definitive remedy of reducing those expenditures. But, with all those limitations and difficulties, the problem can be solved for a time, like the rest of the long string of crises that have arisen since 1945. Probably the Government will have announced measures for its solution long before these lines are read; and it will in my view have two advantages in the operation; the first, that at this early stage the City will not attempt to create serious obstacles, since it will be fearful lest in doing so it creates both an uncontrollable new crisis and a revulsion of public opinion against itself and the whole ruling class, which would lead among other things to a colossal Labour victory at the next Election; and the second, that it will probably have to impose a good many controls which in a quieter atmosphere it would not succeed in imposing, and will thus create a valuable precedent for the time when a bold policy may need further controls.

The task of the Labour M.P.s and of the labour movement generally in this problem is relatively simple; they must give the government the maximum support against any enemy attack, while maintaining the right of criticism when it may be necessary. The problem will be solved better than the Tories would have solved it; by 'solved' I mean patched up for the time, for it could only be remedied, with even the modest degree of permanence achievable under capitalism, by a definite abandonment of our military and colonial-war policies.

The second problem, chronic rather than acute, is the whole broad problem of carrying on government at all with such a small majority. This again is serious; it is of a kind that must arise from time to time under our bad electoral system and our eighteenth-nineteenth century 'rules and conventions of the Constitution'. It is fortunately pretty different from the superficially similar problem of 1950-51, for the ministers who faced it then had worn themselves out in four and a half years of terribly difficult post-war reconstruction—some of them had indeed been in office for ten years on end—and were not equal to more than pottering along from month to month. Today there is a bunch of fresh men, who know that they

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have to convince public opinion of their capacity to rule, and are eager to do so.

In this situation the only possible course for the Government—a course which it has already shown its intention to follow—is to govern in the full sense; *i.e.*, not just to cure one crisis and then administer the country from week to week whilst awaiting the next crisis, but to go straight ahead with the policies on which it fought and just won the Election (the nationalisation of steel, the repeal of the Rent Act, the Crown Lands Commission, pensions and other social services, etc.,) facing both the risk of occasional defeats in parliamentary votes and any attempt by the City to bring about a crash. Only by vigour can they survive, and only by vigour can they qualify for victory in the next General Election.

All this is difficult, but it is not impossible. Defeats on non-vital votes in Committee or in the House itself need no longer be regarded as calling for resignation; the difficulty of long struggles in Committees 'upstairs' with working majorities of one can be met partly by the reform of parliamentary procedure and partly by taking the committee stages of legislation 'on the floor of the House'. The net result will be harder work for M.P.s and a slower tempo of legislation, which is not a serious disadvantage. The government must go ahead steadily, see how things work out, and never shirk. This is how the opposition can best be defeated in Parliament; finance sabotage from the City can best be kept at bay by retaining public support through a constant display of competence and determination, thus making it pretty plain that if at any time a General Election is forced, the Labour Party will go into it with high prospects of victory.

If that is how the Government is to behave, what of the M.P.s? In the present sharp situation, their duty, as I see it, is to support the Government—not blindly as lobby fodder but intelligently, taking full advantage of the opportunities of consultation in regular party meetings and through the Whips, so that decisions on strategy and tactics are genuinely those of the party, whole-heartedly supported by the whole body; it is not a favourable time for forays or revolts. M.P.s have another very important task, far more arduous than it appears from outside; they must attend vigilantly, with no slackness and no 'chancing their arm' by absenteeism; they must indeed behave as if they were all good Communists.

The Labour movement must support and encourage the Government and the M.P.s in their work—again, not blindly but with

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intelligent criticism; the temptation for the more active and far-seeing sections of the movement to make the Government and Parliament move towards a more left-wing policy must be resisted until Labour is so much in command of the situation as against the Tory enemy, that it is possible to discuss strategy without weakening the front line even for a moment.

Then, how much of the programme should be carried forward? As I have implied, the answer must be: 'the whole of it'. Programmes are not all carried through in the first session of a parliament; in practice, major measures are brought forward one by one. Considerations of urgency, resources, opportunities—and tactics too—will determine the order in which the measures should be taken. The Government, the M.P.s, and the whole movement should not think in terms of how long or short the parliament should last, but should aim at carrying through the whole programme, staying in office for five years, not for the sake of staying there but because it is the business of governments to govern and to carry through their programmes.

As I see the situation, the Government and the Labour Party are holding a bridge-head in enemy territory, with troops that are courageous and resolute but handicapped by equipment which is largely identical with that of the enemy. The only possible tactics in a bridge-head is to enlarge it by taking and holding the initiative; and history shows that bridge-heads, which always look dangerous on a map, have on countless occasions been broadened out into secure bases of mighty advance and victory. But at the start, one must hold the bridge-head.

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THE WARREN REPORT

Ivor Montagu

LEGEND already relates that when Chief Justice Warren agreed to accept the Chairmanship of the Kennedy Enquiry Commission he wept. He had good reason. Just as others had good reason to press him to undertake it. It is interesting to speculate what would have been the reception of its report had the Commission been headed by any other of its members—for instance Alan Dulles, the Central Intelligence Agency chief whom Kennedy let go after the Bay of Pigs, or McCloy, ex-High Commissioner in Germany, or either of the racist Democratic Senators (from Georgia and Louisiana) or the Goldwaterite Republican. 'But Brutus is an honourable man.' Or so said Marc Anthony when he was commenting upon another murder by conspiracy. In that case, Julius Caesar. In this, the truth itself. As it is, because of Brutus, the conspiracy has got off to a fair start. Not so fair as the reader of the British press, with its unanimous hooflick nowadays in response to any 'moo' of the Washington sacred cow, might imagine however. The headline in the *New York Times* on the day following publication (September 29) reads: 'WARREN FINDINGS SATISFY OFFICIALS IN WEST EUROPE: MUCH OF PUBLIC SCEPTICAL'. Just so.

The main impact of the report is its voluminousness. It is a real bucket of brainwash. 718 often repetitious pages,* a list of 552 witnesses, innumerable staff, a score or so of volumes of testimony promised ultimately—who, after this, would be ungrateful enough to doubt the thoroughness with which the job was done. The old army sweat will easily recognise this technique. It was called when he was hauled before the C.O., 'blinding him with science'. And the job? To divert attention from the source that stood out as most obviously to be accused.

In the January issue of this magazine, before ever the Commission got down to work, the editor outlined the case, the obvious pointers to C.I.A., F.B.I. and Dallas police, that the world had seized upon and that these agencies of national and local government had to answer. Cumulatively it was damning.† Every one of the counts that he enumerated is confirmed in the report. And much more. The sins of omission, the sins of commission, the facts that arouse suspicion.

*Allusions are to the *New York Times*/Bantam edition.
†The reader will find an extract from the Editor's January Notes at the end of this article.

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It cannot be said that these accused were totally disregarded. The former head of one—Allen Dulles—sat actually on the Commission. The gathering of facts was completely—or in effect completely*—entrusted to the second, the F.B.I. That neither was linked to the crimes in any way is concluded from the assurances of their chiefs. The assurance of Mr. McCone. The assurance of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. Both gentlemen, through their subordinates, were kind enough to produce files. The C.I.A. found no blameworthy association of Oswald with the C.I.A. The F.B.I. found no blameworthy association between him and the F.B.I. Again and again, when a piece of evidence is cited that points in these directions we are told that the F.B.I. found no confirmation. Exactly. There was no cross-examination. When relatives of the bumped-off Lee Harvey Oswald asked to appoint counsel to represent him, they were refused. Half-way through, the Commission got cold feet about this and appointed a respected officer of the Court (who hardly ever bothered to attend), a distinguished Goldwaterite, to advise them whether they were being fair. How one would have liked to hear Lawrence Preston, or even Perry Mason, have a go at this sort of thing!

From the beginning of course, the Commission assumed that U.S. agencies cannot frame, cannot fake evidence, cannot lie. Behind them were Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs, Hoffa, the Presidential assurances about the U2, Adlai Stevenson's assurances to the United Nations about the Bay of Pigs. The ink was scarcely blotted on the confessions about the pretended incidents in the Bay of Tonking. But this was its assumption. It remarks firmly that after the releases and pictures and allegations about Lee Harvey Oswald it would have been impossible to ensure him a fair trial because of the assumptions any possible jury would make. And then it makes the same assumptions its own whole point of departure in a trial in which his voice was silenced.

Its starting-point and its end: not only that Lee Harvey Oswald did it, but that he did it alone. This 'alone' was vital. Some people may wonder why, after the careful construction of threads tying Oswald to the U.S.S.R., to Communists, Trotskyists, Cuba, etc., someone changed his mind and the 'alone' version, followed by the Commission, was followed instead, from within an hour or two of his arrest. Someone was sensible. These threads were altogether too thin and must snap under any weight. It was too dangerous to have

*Except for other Federal and State organs. This was the White House instruction. But no-one investigated the F.B.I.

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any live accused whose counter-attack might smash the whole thing. After all, the Reichstag Fire Trial was not without its lesson. To prove the Communists guilty, the prosecution revealed evidence that Van der Lubbe could not have done the job alone. As nothing could implicate the Communists, the Nazis pointed at themselves and all the efforts nowadays to whitewash them are bound to fail. How much handier to have bumped off Van der Lubbe on the spot, instead of merely drugging him, and then had a posthumous enquiry commission with Goering as a member and the Gestapo in sole control of collecting evidence.

To reach their pre-ordained conclusion, the Commission had to do some splendid wriggling. The student of the report will notice three outstanding features. First, that when there is any conflict of evidence the Commission threads itself neatly through it, adopting anything consistent with its theory, dismissing as 'mistaken' anything that contradicts it. The doctors who first examined Kennedy thought he was shot from the front. Easy, they were mistaken. Some witnesses thought the shots heard were fired from the repository, some thought from the bridge. Easy, the first were right, the second wrong. Contradictions in time and identity alike are solved by this convenient formula. However, sometimes this wears a little thin. Witnesses who saw Oswald in inconvenient places were mistaken in their recognition—they had seen T.V. pictures of him and this vitiates their evidence. But on the other hand, in their conclusion the Commission claim that nine witnesses saw Oswald kill Tippett or run away after his murder. It becomes a little ingenuous of them to ignore (what they admit later in their text) that the same reservation applies to these. Sometimes they make downright mistakes. One awkward identification of Oswald is dismissed because the 'Oswald' seen got drunk, and Lee Harvey, the Commission says, did not drink. But the report later describes an incident in which he did, most thoroughly. (Incidentally, a tantalising reference occurs (p. 628) to 'the English language edition of the *Daily Worker*', allegedly read by Oswald. One would like to know more about this paper.)

On one crucial question let us examine the Commission's treatment of the question whether it was *possible* for a man like Oswald to fire the shots and hit the President. This is a clear example of its method. It knows that there is a great question whether one man with such a rifle could accurately have fired the number of shots available in the given time. So first it is anxious to minimise the number of shots. After a lot of weighing and microscopic examina-

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tion of bullets (and no explanation of the interval before traces of bullets were looked for on the ground) it concludes that the number must have been three or four and plumps for three. After analysing the evidence of times shots were heard and wounds were seen it comes to the conclusion that if, of the three bullets fired, two hit Kennedy and one hit Governor Connolly the time necessary would have been 4·8 to 5·6 seconds. But this is inconvenient because it comes too close to the time taken for these shots in their tests. So they have the magnificent idea that if one shot missed, and if this was not the middle one but the first or third, the time evidence could be held to give up to 7·1 or even 7·9 seconds. Accordingly in their report they not only state it as a possibility, that one shot hit *both* Kennedy and Connolly, but conclude it as a fact, loading a headline THE SHOT THAT MISSED, although this is absolutely contrary not only to Connolly's impression but to the insistent evidence of Connolly's wife, also in the car, who is determined it was after Kennedy was hit that she heard the shot that hit her husband. The Commission argue that this is perfectly consistent with their conclusion because sound does not travel instantaneously. According to the distance it gives, the sound would have reached Mrs. Connolly in about 1/6th of a second. (This is not one of the figures in the generous avalanche of technical data.)

Next, they take the rifle found in the book depository and arrange for three expert shots to try to shoot three targets arranged at intervals corresponding in angle and distance to the positions of the Presidential car at the probable interval of time. They succeed, but dangerously near the minimum. But why in this test were the targets not moving? And, above all, why experts? The evidence the Commission itself cites shows that Oswald's ability was nowhere near the expert's. 'Expert' is the top category of three. Oswald in the marines had two tests. One gave him a bare two marks above the minimum for the second category. The other (later) placed him well down in the third (the lowest). The Commission's comment on this latter test is characteristic. Without a shred of evidence it suggests that at the time it might have been raining. And yet now two, possibly all three of his shots were hits. Why do the test with experts? They quote evidence from Oswald's wife, that he had practised a dry run (loading and unloading) apparently with this rifle. They have no testimony that he ever fired a single practice shot with it. They argue that his task of aiming anew for each shot was made easier because the car was going down a slope of 3 degrees. The height of the building is

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one of the relevant figures omitted. But the distances are given, the minimum height for the sixth floor is not hard to gauge from the photographs and trigonometry shows this special pleading pretty weak.

The second feature: that the main sustaining evidence against Oswald has been provided by his wife—who, of course, could not have been made to testify against him at all had this been a trial. The evidence of other parties is thin and contradictory, doubtful recognitions, selected assumptions, behaviour without rhyme or reason. It is entirely the testimony of Marina, the Russian-born wife, that puts flesh and blood on the flimsy skeleton. Marina, who speaks no English, who first declared her disbelief in her husband's guilt, who was placed, in effect, incommunicado by the F.B.I. as soon as the crime was committed and who the Commission triumphantly boasts in its conclusions, has now changed her view. Marina, against whom, as is clear from the report, the U.S. authorities have a clear case whenever they like to press it, for false statement on her immigration form. The Commission are faced with a problem: how to account for Oswald, with a complete absence of any violence on his previous record, having suddenly taken to assassination. So Marina comes to the rescue with a story that he earlier tried to shoot General Walker.* How this marksman, capable of accurate shots from an unfamiliar stance in a few seconds against a moving target came then to miss a sitting target, in a location that, according to the report, he had previously prepared and studied, and with all the time in the world at his disposal, is not even discussed by the Committee. It is Marina, too, who helps to whitewash the most damning document admitted by the Committee; the notation of a local F.B.I. officer's name and address in Oswald's notebook. Explanation: the F.B.I. made a routine call on the woman with whom Marina was staying, told her Oswald was a suspicious character and left his name and address so she could report to him on his activities. So the woman promptly gave the name and address to Marina who gave it to Oswald who wrote it in his notebook. Really, there seems no limit to the credulity expected of the public by the Commission and the F.B.I.

The third remarkable feature is the amount of space devoted to psychologising Lee Harvey Oswald. Or perhaps it is not remarkable considering the rôle played in contemporary U.S. society by the

*Incidentally, General Walker still insists (*Evening Standard*, October) that neighbours saw *two* men involved in the assassination attempt. This inconvenient fact is not mentioned by the Commission.

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The Shadow

Forty years ago, on November 7, 1924, a delegation of seven veteran and experienced British trade unionists, representing the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, left London for a visit to the Soviet Union. They went at the invitation of the Central Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., which had had a delegation to the Hull T.U.C. that year. Chairman of the delegation was A. A. Purcell (Furnishing Trades), who had presided at Hull, and was for many years a member of the Social-Democratic Federation and British Socialist Party. Other members were Herbert Smith (Miners' President), Ben Tillett (Political Secretary of the Transport and General Workers), John Turner (General Secretary of the Shop Assistants, 1912-24, and for many years an Anarchist), John Bromley, M.P. (General Secretary of the Locomen), A. A. H. Findlay (Patternmakers' President) and Fred Bramley (General Secretary of the T.U.C.). They represented a wide range of political opinion. They spent over a month in the U.S.S.R., investigating social and political conditions with a critical eye, helped by three advisers with an expert knowledge of Russian. They attended the 6th Congress of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. as fraternal delegates. Their 250-page report 'Russia', published the following year by the General Council, is one of the classic documents of British and international trade unionism. It aroused furious denunciations from the press, politicians and above all the right-wing socialist and trade union leaders in all other capitalist countries. At the same time it educated active trade unionists and socialists in the essential facts about the Soviet Union.

For this anniversary month of the October Revolution, we print extracts from the report, together with a cartoon that spoke for British labour.

The Working Class. 'The Russian workers are the ruling class of Russia. They enjoy the rights of a ruling class. They are beginning to exercise its responsibilities. . . . The workers are the ultimate owners and rulers of industry, and though they have given the conduct of it to business managements, yet they retain the control'.

The Trade Unions. 'The delegation were much impressed by the position and activities of trade unions under the Soviet system. Being largely freed from their main function elsewhere of protecting the workers against exploitation by the wealthy, and preventing the public service of the workers from being prejudiced for private profit, the trade unions have been able to engage in educating the workers as citizens and rulers'.

Soviet Society. 'The keystone or main feature of the new structure is the creation of a power of personal worth by the destruction of the power of private wealth. . . The moral tone is likely to be greatly improved by the new status acquired by woman'.

The Soviet System. 'The Soviet system of representation and its scheme of constitutional and civil rights, so far from being undemocratic in the widest sense of the word, has given in many respects to the individual a more real and reasonable opportunity of participation in public affairs than does parliamentary and party government. In other respects, such participation is still restricted'.

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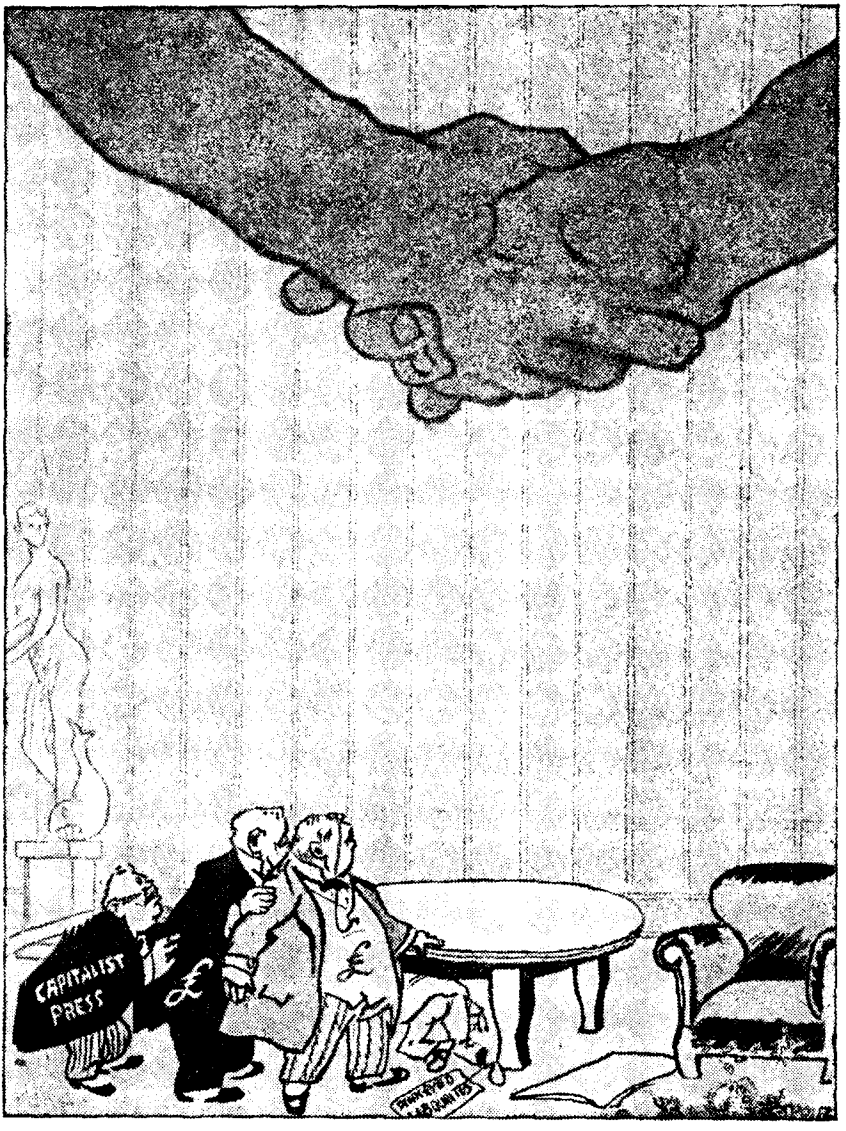
a Handshake



(From Lansbury's *Labour Weekly*.)

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psychologist as a sort of sorcerer or medicine man. The Commission is desperately anxious to discover a motive for this man, who never spoke against Kennedy, had no grudge against Kennedy, suddenly deciding on his own to shoot Kennedy. They even, in one place, suggest (while declaring themselves not convinced) that it was because he had just heard his wife running down his sexual ability in the presence of third parties. This mania for finding the simple inexplicable and resorting to 'psychology', reminds me of Honor Tracy's account, in her book on MacArthur's occupation of Japan, of the two G.I.s who were noticed enjoying their doxies in broad daylight on a public hard tennis court in Tokyo, and were remitted to the psychiatric ward for study on why they were doing it. For, on the assumption of the Committee, that he and he alone is the assassin, the case is certainly a problem. The young man who claims he was first attracted to Communism at the age of 16—and at 20 promptly joins the U.S. marines; who spends his time in the marines —studying the Russian language and Marxism. The flourishing ex-marine—who has money to go to U.S.S.R. The disillusioned anti-communist who writes an exposure of Soviet society on his way home—and on arrival, instead of publishing it, promptly takes out a subscription to the Worker instead. The unemployed man who spends his sparse savings on printing propaganda and a visit to Mexico.* This intending assassin who draws attention to himself by getting on radio and arrested as a supporter of 'Fair Play for Cuba', and creating a row in Mexico City at the Cuban and Soviet Embassies—and leaves conveniently at his home a photograph of himself with a pistol and rifle holding copies of the *Worker* and the *Militant*. All that of course takes some psychologising—if you make the Commission's assumption. No psychology can explain (so of course the Commission does not attempt to) why a man whose motive for shooting the President was (as it imaginatively concludes) to assert his personality, to be a somebody in the world and then go down in history, should do this deed and then deny it. Booth, after shooting Lincoln, jumped on the stage for an opportunity to shout '*Sic semper tyrannis*!' Every other assassin or would-be assassin of a U.S. President (all detailed in the report) proclaimed the deed. Not Lee Harvey Oswald. All he said in public was that he didn't do it. Of what he said to the Dallas police in private the Commission notes that not a word was recorded, but admits he persisted in his denial.

*A fascinating 'budget' projected by the Commission and certified as sane by the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics ($27.73 for the Cuba leaflets and letterheads, $68.25 for his fare to Mexico and a week's stay (with food) at a hotel), works out over more than seventeen months within twenty dollars of the sum disposed of when arrested!

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But if this assumption is not made, if the denials of the C.I.A. and F.B.I. are taken, as grown-ups surely should take them, with the head cocked just slightly to one side and a recollection of the number of times these bodies have been caught lying, framing and—in the case of the first—even assassinating; if, in other words, we admit even *just the possibility* that Oswald (who was certainly not innocent) was a fall-guy, small fry doing a job for one and/or the other, one of many kept ripe and ready for convenient usage and here employed to put hounds off the scent—then there is no mystery whatever about his biography, the problem disappears.

The effort to blur this in connection with the State Department, whose actual records can less easily claim excuse for non-publication than can those of the two cloak-and-dagger institutions, brings on a veritable orgy of contortions on the part of the Commission. Oswald gets his passport to go to Russia, the first time, in six days, puts on an act at the U.S. Embassy insulting everyone and declaring his loyalty to U.S.S.R. When even this does not get him any job nearer the hub of affairs in Russia then relegation to the premises as a small craftsman, he applies to return with his wife and asks for cash to do so. The resentful Embassy staff at first says no, but then is overruled by superiors at home who stretch the regulations.* The Commission says this was because the State Department regarded Oswald as 'an unstable character whose actions are highly unpredictable', and therefore considered it in the best interests of U.S.A. to get him back and out of Russia as soon as possible. Nevertheless, when he applies to the State Department for a new passport to go to Cuba *and to U.S.S.R. again*, the same department which has just subsidised him to come out of U.S.S.R. in the U.S. interest, grants it at once, this time in one day! Which, says the Commission, was just routine! The Commission admits that in such cases a 'look-out card' is made out, warning that such a man should not get a passport again without due consideration. It even has a witness who remembers making out such a card for Oswald, but it was not in his file and none can remember how it failed to get in (or got out).

A report so packed with facts cannot but include, however fantastic, illuminations of American life. It is by no means devoid of unintentional humour. One is when Oswald, whose letters and diary and other writings are abundantly quoted *throughout and who cannot write one single sentence correctly and without misspellings,*

*A form filled in by Oswald, if carefully read, would have shown him disqualified to return. The Commission, which is concerned to show the State Department as acting properly at every stage, states Oswald must have written his answer by mistake on the wrong line.

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is solemnly recorded as having been interviewed for a job and assessed as being of 'outstanding verbal-clerical potential' (p. 640). Another is when, with equal deadpan, we are told (p. 361) that he baited his officers by leading 'them into discussions of foreign affairs about which they often knew less than he did'. (Heavens above, what must be the level of commissioned rank education in the U.S. marines!) But the whole 'investigation' rollicks into farce when it starts on the biography of Jack Ruby, the man who so conveniently shut the mouth of fall-guy Oswald.

'Many former employees of Ruby', we learn, 'stated that he was a pleasant or unobjectionable employer', 'genuinely interested in their welfare and happiness. In a moment, however, it is explained that he also dominated them, publicly embarrassed them, frequently resorted to violence against them, sometimes attempted to cheat them of their pay, and delayed paying their salaries. He struck one on the head with a blackjack, kicked another—a guitarist—in the groin. His partner was given eight years for sodomy and he himself arrested eight times in a few years for violence and various violations of laws. His activities, the Commission quotes a friend as saying, were 'shady but legitimate'. Nevertheless this paragon was on excellent terms with the Dallas police. His 'personal attachment' to police affairs is demonstrated by reports that he attended the funeral of at least one policeman killed in action. Ruby regarded several officers as personal friends, and others had worked for him. Finally, at least one policeman regularly dated and eventually married, one of the night club's strippers. The Commission concludes that 'the precise nature of his relationship to members of the Dallas Police Department is not susceptible of conclusive evaluation', but it hazards the guess that the Dallas' police chief's testimony that a maximum of 50 of his men were acquainted with Ruby is possibly an underestimation. Nobody noticed him about in police headquarters when he shot Oswald, they guess, because probably he was there only about 30 seconds.

From gay to grave: perhaps the most sinister part of the Report is the last chapter. It goes over all the actions and failures of the security organs that were charged with Kennedy's safety. 'Errors' it characterises them. The remedy? A committee to think up something and meanwhile more of the same. More Secret Service. More money and men for J. Edgar Hoover. More 'Liaison with local Law Enforcement Agencies' (*i.e.*, such as the Dallas police). And, we may suppose, if he is bumped off, more enquiries packed with

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enemies. The warning is clear: like a Sultan surrounded by his Mamelukes, the titular ruler of U.S.A. is to continue to know he must not go too far.

Any speculation at present can only be in the air, since the essential facts are still hidden. But on the face of it this highly organised coup (even to the provision of a 'fall guy' Van der Lubbe and rapid killing of the fall guy while manacled in custody, as soon as there appeared a danger of his talking), with the manifest complicity necessary of a very wide range of authorities, bears all the hallmarks of a C.I.A. job.

After all, the C.I.A. had just arrived fresh from bumping off Diem earlier in the same month. The Kennedy job was certainly a larger order to undertake; but the operation was manifestly organised with the customary elaborate attention to detail. Even the background information offered with regard to the Van der Lubbe presented a highly peculiar story. From the Marines; a supposed 'defector' to the Soviet Union being rejected by the Soviet Union; after he has done his job there, returning with all expenses paid by the U.S. Government (not usually so generous to 'defectors'); endeavours to join the anti-Castro gangs in New Orleans, but is rejected by them on the grounds that they regard him as an agent of the C.I.A.; turns up next as a supposed Chairman of a non-existent branch of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which denies knowledge of him or the existence of any branch either in Louisiana or Texas; applies vainly for a visa to Cuba; travels about widely, including to Mexico, with no visible source of finance. Here is typical small fry ('so weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune, that I would set my life on any chance, to mend it or be rid on 't') fit to be chosen, and equipped with damning 'evidence' as an expendable fall guy, while a more skilled hand does the deed. By accident, when the whole of Dallas is screened in vigilant preparation, the one most strategic building on the route is overlooked. By accident the one notorious suspect, already under supervision by the F.B.I., but intended this time to be found as a suspect, is overlooked in the general rounding up and clearing out of all suspects. By accident, when immediately after the murder the whole building is swarming with police, he is able to walk out unmolested. And then when the unhappy fall guy, tricked and trapped and no doubt double-crossed in face of previous promises of an easy getaway and rich reward, noisily protests his innocence, a quick shot inside the prison closes his mouth; and the shot is fired, oddly enough, again through an accidental oversight in letting this unauthorised intruder come close with a revolver, by a type described as an underworld character close to the police. No. The whole story is really too thick; and the more details are offered, the thicker it gets. Of course it will all be cleared up now by the Presidential Commission of Enquiry. Or perhaps not. Naturally we can have every confidence. For on the Presidential Commission Enquiry sits appropriately enough our old friend Allen Dulles, former Director of the C.I.A.

(From the Notes of the Month written on December 10, 1963.)

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THE SOVIET INTERPRETATION OF PROFIT

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IN reference to a *Pravda* article on the rôle profit is called upon to play in the Soviet economy, the press in Britain speaks of changes that have supposedly taken place in the U.S.S.R. It claims that profit was once a word which was taboo but that now it is being popularised by Soviet economists. Westerners often construe this circumstance as meaning that since the profit motive is being introduced in the U.S.S.R., centralised economic planning is consequently on the wane, and a transition is thus being effected to a full scale market economy or even, to something like a system of free enterprise. That is of course a delusion and—let us hope—not wishful thinking.

Profit is the expression in money of surplus value. Now surplus value in addition to the measure of personal needs, is necessary for any society to exist and develop. Soviet economists did not invent this term. It was there in slave society, it was there under feudalism and it exists under capitalism, and it is needed every bit as much under socialism as well. Profit (as the expression in money of surplus value) persists in the U.S.S.R., as a commodity-money economy operates in our country and will operate until communism is built. However, in derivation and designation, profit in Soviet enterprises has little in common with profit under capitalism. In the U.S.S.R. it is the difference between plan prices and production costs. The smaller the cost, the bigger the profit. A profit increase in the U.S.S.R. is the expression in money of the growth of the productivity of social labour. Profit in the U.S.S.R. spells the saving of so many tons of raw material, so many hours of work time and so many kilowatt hours of electricity. That is all.

Capitalist concerns may inflate profits by applying monopoly prices, by taking advantage of market fluctuations, by exerting pressure on the labour power market, and finally by carrying on unequivalent exchange with the less developed and colonial countries. That is out of the question in the U.S.S.R. As for the designation of profit in the U.S.S.R., it is disposed of not by private individuals as under capitalism, but by society in general. Since profit cannot be turned into capital, as no private person is allowed to use it to

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acquire means of production, it is quite obvious that the use of profit in the U.S.S.R. holds no danger of a transition to capitalism. The running of the economy at a profit provides the basis for our advance.

Production is carried on in the U.S.S.R., not for the sake of making profit but to satisfy the working people's requirements more fully. No wonder Khrushchov noted in 1962, that profit is not the social aim or motive force of our production as it is under capitalism. At the same time profit in the U.S.S.R. should discharge at least two important functions. In the first place, this is a form of accumulating funds to expand production and gratify social needs. In the second place, to a still greater extent than under capitalism profit can serve to gauge the economic efficiency of an enterprise, provided the policy of planning of prices is correct. That is precisely what many Soviet economists and managers are preoccupied with today. They have not the slightest intention of dethroning planning. On the contrary they merely wish to simplify and improve it on the basis of the incentive pay system, applying profit to this end. They believe it fair and just for the workers at an enterprise that functions better and hence provides more of the net product (profit) for society, to get more from society for their own consumption. This is an incentive pay system for work done but by no means a form of stacking up wealth, because in the U.S.S.R. no private individual is able to exploit hired labour for profit, by virtue of the simple fact that the means of production are commonly, not privately, owned.

Centralised planning and supervision is compatible with the use of profit, as it retains full force in the sphere of the establishment of the basic proportions and rates of the development of the branches of the economy. The plan says which part of the national income should be used for expanding production and which part should be used for consumption. The guiding principle therein is to have what is made for society and the state profitable for every man, woman and child.

STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

Why not take out a Group Subscription to *Labour Monthly?* At this cheap rate of 1s. 9d. per copy, it could be useful as the basis for discussions.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Andrew Rothstein

IN one of his election speeches, Sir Alec Douglas Home explained to Bradford voters—and the *Daily Telegraph* on October 7 thought it was worth while giving him the main news heading on its front page—that 'Socialism would ruin Britain. It is no policy for a modern go-ahead industrial country. The country which really experimented with it is Russia. Having learnt their lesson, they are now galloping back to the system of enterprise and reward'.

The then Prime Minister did not stop to say where he had read that Socialism is against enterprise and reward, or even when the 'gallop' began. When Lenin proposed, and the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party decided on, the New Economic Policy in March 1921, the British press was full of learned proofs that the Bolshevik 'experiment' had failed and that Russia was 'galloping back' to capitalism. It has been a long gallop, hasn't it?

Moreover, the lesson had been learned long before. There comes to mind a pamphlet which was widely circulated in March 1918, by a Russian emigrant Zinoy N. Preev, *The Russian Riddle*, one of many with which the people were bombarded in 1918-19. Mr. Preev wrote: 'Were the Bolsheviks to succeed in their self-appointed task, to which both the instinct of the nation and the world's economics (!) are opposed, Russia would be reduced to the level of a loose, unorganised, barbaric community, or rather a conglomeration of independent communities without any economic intercourse, without industries, commerce or financial facilities. Fortunately, signs are not wanting that the Bolshevik experiment is doomed to failure'. The doom has been a long time coming, and Mr. Preev's prophecies read particularly well in the days of the space-ships.

As the forty-seventh anniversary of the October Revolution comes round, the reflections of troglodytes like the Tory Prime Minister or Z. N. Preev have their use—to send us back to essential facts about the results of that great 'experiment' of the Russian working class led by the Bolsheviks, for which there had only been one short-lived precedent, in Paris in 1871. Let the facts speak.

The aim of the October Revolution was to overthrow the power of the landowners, the bankers, the owners of factories and other industrial establishments. Since 1917 in Russia proper, since the end

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of the Civil War and the expulsion of the Japanese from the Far East in 1922, there has not been a landowner or a private bank in Soviet territory, and all their shares, bonds, debentures and mortgages have been worthless bits of paper. The same happened to the larger industries, nationalised in the summer of 1918. The small private workshops allowed under the New Economic Policy were squeezed out in 1929-30. All the 'Kulaks'—rich peasants exploiting their neighbours—tolerated under the New Economic Policy were expropriated in 1930-34. All private capitalists in the territories reunited with the U.S.S.R. during the second world war—the Baltic Republics, Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine and Bessarabia —were dispossessed more swiftly.

The aim of the October Revolution was to replace private ownership of the means of production by social ownership. This has been done. The land is State property: no-one can buy or sell it. 100 per cent of the output of industry is produced in socially-owned establishments (State or co-operative). All banks are publicly owned. 99·9 per cent of the output of agriculture is produced on State farms and collective (co-operative) farms, working on the State land: and although part of collective farm produce is grown on the individual allotments of the collective farmers (so that they can feed themselves as well as selling 95 per cent of the surplus to the co-operatives and the State), the basic agricultural products required by the State are purchased from State farms and the *socially-owned* sector on the collective farms. This applies to 100 per cent of the grain, sugarbeet and cotton, 90 per cent of the milk, 87 per cent of the vegetables, 85 per cent of the wool, 77 per cent of the meat and only for about half of its eggs and potatoes does Soviet economy still rely on the individual allotments.

The aim of the October Revolution was to close the door for ever to a rebirth of capitalism on Soviet territory. This has been done. By whatever means a Soviet citizen accumulates money—whether by legitimate means, such as high earnings, or by breaking the law* —he or she cannot buy a single share in public enterprise, or live legally without working (if able-bodied), or hire labour for purposes

*In recent months one more attempt has been made (as so often since 1917) to prove the existence of a 'new bourgeoisie' in the Soviet Union and even of an 'unprecedented danger of capitalist restoration' there. The evidence produced is taken (as the Western bourgeoisie has always done) from Soviet law reports—that there are embezzlers, fiddlers of goods produced in State factories and collective farms, speculators and plain thieves in the U.S.S.R. These are lumped together as a 'class'—in ludicrous defiance of what Marxism regards as a class: a section of the people owning, or not owning or part-owning, the means of production. Lenin in his *State and Revolution* (ch. 15) anticipated the existence of parasites of this kind in an advanced stage of Socialist society—'guardians of capitalist traditions'. Soviet difficulties since 1938 provided much opportunity, of course, for the survival, even temporary revival, of such criminal activities in the midst of basic, even rapid, Socialist advance.

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of production. If he tries it on, society treats him far from gently.

The aim of the October Revolution was to provide educational opportunities to the highest levels for all. The awe-struck tributes of bodies like the Federation of British Industries or the Institute of Directors to the system and the results of scientific and technical education in the U.S.S.R.—and these require a solid ground work of general education—would be sufficient answer: but one may add that by 1963, 50 per cent of the population had had a higher or secondary education (to 17).

The Revolution aimed at providing other social services for the people which hitherto had been reserved for the privileged minority. This has been done. The 22½ million workers drawing State pensions —men at 60, women at 55, at levels not less than half their previous earnings (much more, for millions of them in arduous occupations) —and the millions among the collective farmers who are being added this year, are one proof. The 9 million working people and their children who spent their holidays in 1963 wholly or partly at the public expense, in sanatoria, rest homes and Pioneer camps, are another. The 53,000 combined nursery schools and day-nurseries, and the 5½ million children accommodated in these and in separate day-nurseries, at the beginning of 1963, are a third. The vast housing effort—at the rate of not less than 2 million new apartments *a year* in the towns for many years past, and of 500,000 village houses built *every year* with State credit during the last 5 years—are a fourth.

The October Revolution aimed at the emancipation of women. Equal pay wherever they do equal work with men, their equal access to training for skilled work in industry and the professions, the opportunities thrown open to them by the pre-school facilities for children just mentioned, their advance in respect of public posts —28 per cent of seats in the Supreme Soviet, 40 per cent in local authorities, half a dozen woman Presidents of large and small Soviet Republics by 1963—these are only part of the evidence that the 1917 pledges are being carried out.

The October Revolution proclaimed the liberation and the equality of all Soviet peoples, great and small. There is not one of the former colonial or nationally-oppressed peoples of the Tsarist Empire which cannot show that in living standards, in literacy, in general and scientific education, in cultural advance, in freedom to use whatever language they please, in economic opportunity, in self-government by their own elected representatives, they have advanced in many cases more swiftly than the Russian people themselves.

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Indians, Africans, Latin-Americans who visit them have all borne witness.

The October Revolution held out the prospect that, as these and other features of *Socialist* society developed towards the abundance which would make possible *Communist* society, the opportunity for ordinary mortals to manage public affairs would grow rapidly. Features of Soviet life totally without parallel in capitalist countries bear out this prospect—such as the $2\frac{1}{4}$ million *elected* volunteers who are running social insurance, the $2\frac{1}{2}$ million *elected* voluntary factory inspectors, the 10 million who are participating as 'lay assistants' in the work of various departments in the Soviet municipalities. And what of the vast numbers of manual workers and technicians who contribute every year to Soviet economic advance, by their inventions and rationalisation proposals? The latest figure, for 1963, is 4,300,000 such proposals, made by 2,800,000 people—and over $2\frac{3}{4}$ million proposals actually put into effect during the year, meaning a saving of some £680 millions in 1963 alone.

So that's what 'galloping back' from Socialism looks like. What a pity Sir Alec didn't say which capitalist country presents such a many-sided picture of what they're galloping to!

Problems of Trade Unionism in the Sixties

TRADE UNION EDUCATION: AN END OR A BEGINNING?

J. R. Shanley

[*In the October issue we printed an article on Trade Union Education. It aroused much interest and we are pleased to print this comment by Mr. Shanley, Assistant General Secretary of the National Union of Furniture Trades Operatives, who spoke on this subject at the T.U.C. in September.*]

AS Richard Martindall stated, the faintly flickering torch of independent working-class education was quenched by the General Council. Yet, although one of the grey-haired remnants of the brigade that so bravely marched from the Central Labour College in the 'twenties, I am not so despondent as Martindall, for the decision at Congress was not to 'take-over' but to 'hand-over'—to the Universities!

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Although written many years ago, the quotation below (with a slight addition by myself) gives the reason for my confidence. This end must bring a new beginning.

> Natural scientists (and trade union officials, *my addition, J.R.S.*) believe that they free themselves from philosophy by ignoring it or abusing it. They cannot, however, make any headway without thought, and for thought they need thought determinations. But they take these categories unreflectingly from the common consciousness of so-called educated persons, which is dominated by the relics of long obsolete philosophies, or from the little bit of philosophy compulsorily listened to at the university (which is not only fragmentary, but also a medley of views of people belonging to the most varied and usually the worst schools), or from uncritical and unsystematic reading of philosophical writings of all kinds. Hence they are no less in bondage to philosophy, but unfortunately in most cases to the worst philosophy, and those who abuse philosophy most are slaves to precisely the worst vulgarised relics of the worst philosophers.
>
> (From *Dialectics of Nature* by F. Engels.)

The T.U.C. has turned to a source that can find no answers to the problems that face trade unions. Note an illuminating parallel. At Congress the General Council was concerned with finance, deployment of resources and control. On the content of the education to be provided, the Report was silent. Lord James writing in the *Sunday Times* on University Education stated:

> We may be so pre-occupied with the finance and buildings and numbers and administration that we may give too little thought to the actual content of the education.

As compared with the time Engels wrote, the scientists have grown to giants. They now bestride the world, transforming it almost from day to day, probing into the secrets of the atom at one end and into the infinity of the cosmos at the other. Yet they remain when outside their laboratories prisoners of the 'common consciousness of educated persons'. They make the bomb, they build automation, but remain blind to or refuse to accept responsibility for, the social consequences! It is necessary to keep in mind that the battle of ideas is no academic question. Capitalism revolutionises the physical means of production and so forces advances in the Exact Sciences. Simultaneously it seeks to stop the change in the structure of society that these new productive forces make essential, so uses every resource in its power to retard advance in the Social Sciences. The schoolmaster assumes the role of an intellectual policeman.

What is the situation in the Universities on the Social Sciences? A few of the Dons not completely steeped in mysticism or medievalism have told us in a Pelican Booklet *The Crisis of the Humanities*.

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They speak of specialists who 'dig their last ditches against the advance of the scientists'; of studies in the 'Humanities' that 'have lost touch with reality'; of contemporary education that needs a new purpose and relevance; of History that has become 'irrelevant to actual experience'; of philosophy that has 'lost its way' and been reduced to the 'crudities of linguistic analysis'. They write of theology that has become 'meaningless in a secular world' (yet Oxford has 11 chairs in Theology, 2 in Politics, none in Sociology). They turn to art and tell us it has 'cut itself away from its roots'; and even of economics that have lost all purpose and meaning for those who organise production and has been reduced to a 'sophistication of mathematical techniques'. Sociology they speak of as a 'new subject', still mistrusted and seeking 'facile respectability'. Surely a catalogue of bankrupty! The whole apparatus of orthodox education, except in the Exact Sciences, is slipping into a mire of obscurantism, even if dressed up in mathematical garments.

Proud of its practical approach, the T.U.C. has decided to collect the money and leave the philosophy to its betters! Thus they can only become prisoners of the pseudo-sophisticated, irrational theories so prevalent in cultured and erudite circles. But trade unionists cannot stay remote from reality. Nor will all within the Universities be content to accept the intellectual smoke screen designed to obscure the need for fundamental social change. Even the scientists will have to lift their eyes from their microscopes and think again about the social significances of their own discoveries!

Look at America—that solid phalanx of A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership. Automation and Goldwater has sent them spinning. What they applauded they now fear. No use to appeal to the heavens and plead that 'the problems of automation must be solved within the context of a free society', meaning of course American monopoly capitalism. Nor will platitudes about 'areas of common agreement' and 'no differences in principle' take us far in Britain—in face of reality.

So Brother Martindall, don't despair. Reinforcements are just over the horizon. There will be many in the immediate future who will not be content to take their way of looking at life unreflectingly from the 'common consciousness of so-called educated persons'. In the meantime it should not be impossible to bring together at least some of the few, to whom you referred, to maintain the best part of N.C.L.C. tradition—the preparation of text books that can be used by the type of grass-roots lecturers the N.C.L.C. also produced.

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THE POLITICS OF TORTURE

Hilda Bernstein

FOR one brief moment a door was opened on South Africa a little while ago when Suliman Saloojee, a 32-year-old Indian clerk, jumped to his death from the seventh floor of a building called The Grays. There was the merest glimpse of what is happening in the apartheid state today before the door slammed shut once more. The Grays is headquarters of the Security Police in Johannesburg. Political prisoners are brought for interrogation to the seventh floor. Saloojee, who smashed onto a parapet and died on his way to hospital, was undergoing interrogation on the 65th day of his detention in solitary confinement under the '90-day' law. (The Security Police then took action to ensure that such a thing does not happen again: they had burglar-proofing fitted to the windows of the interrogation room.) A friend wrote: 'His death caused only the slightest ripple on the surface of white opinion'. No one put a foot in the door to hold it open. Why? The answer is simple: because both inside and outside South Africa people do not want to believe in the terrible things that are happening today. To admit the truth—the systematic torture of political prisoners—to recognise it, entails acceptance of responsibility for what are not simply the occasional excesses of individual policemen, but state policy. We do not want to be told about such things. It makes us uncomfortable. It reminds us of Nazi Germany, and episodes in human behaviour that we would rather forget. True, unpleasant things have happened since then; the revelations of methods used in the Kenya emergency; French policy in Algeria—who will forget Alleg's 'La Question'? But to a certain extent they were different. They were colonial régimes and it is still possible to think in terms of lesser breeds without the law. But South Africa is a modern industrial state and an ardent upholder of Western civilisation. Wasn't Saloojee, perhaps, just someone who was a bit unbalanced?

The incident cannot be so lightly put aside. There are now too many suicides, unexplained deaths, cases of insanity, and affidavits of torture. Hundreds of African political prisoners have been subject to shock treatment in which the procedure is standardised throughout all jails. The victim is forced to crouch, with knees bent and wrists handcuffed in front of them; a pole is placed over his arms and under his knees, making movement impossible; a sack is put over his head, wires tied to his fingers. Half-suffocated, violent elec-

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tric shocks jerk his body. Sometimes he is raised above the ground by the pole, shocked, then allowed to fall to the ground, kicked and beaten or whipped with a hosepipe.

White political prisoners have only recently become subject to physical violence. A form of torture that the Portuguese devised and call 'The Statue' is now being used. Testimony comes from many sources, including three former 90-day detainees (they are now charged with political offences and awaiting trial), Norman Levy, vice-principal of a Johannesburg college, Paul Trewhela, a journalist and Costa Gazides, a doctor. In sworn affidavits they describe how they were made to stand for days and nights without moving or resting while continuously subject to interrogation by relays of Security men, hauled to their feet when they collapsed, and brought round with buckets of water when they fainted. After 48 consecutive hours of standing, Levy was allowed to crawl back to his cell, only to be fetched again for questioning. Trewhela was made to stand for 69 hours during which time he was able to snatch about four hours' sleep at intervals. Gazides stood for 43 hours without a break. Ivan Schermbrucker smuggled a note out to his wife written on toilet paper describing how he was tortured and nearly ended his own life. When his wife made an urgent application to court to stop the torture, the court ruled they had no jurisdiction whatsoever over 90-day detainees.

Because physical torture is in a way a measurable thing and perhaps more dramatic, it receives a certain amount of publicity. But the mind-breaking of the 90-day law is in some ways more horrible. The law empowers police officers to arrest without warrant and detain without trial for any number of 90-day periods. Victims are held in tiny cells, without furniture, in solitary confinement, allowed only two short exercise periods a day (and often not given even that). They are not allowed any books, pens, paper, or work of any kind, nor may they speak to anyone. No one can visit them or write to them. *Nobody held in this way for any length of time emerges the same as when they went into solitary confinement.* 'Psychiatrists, psychologists and scientists of world reputation will, without exception, tell you that prolonged isolation is the cruelest kind of torment' states Hamilton Russell (South African M.P.). The specialists call it 'sensory deprivation' and their experiments produce consistent patterns of mental unbalance. Hundreds of men, women and children as young as 15, 16 and 17 have been subject to this cruelest kind of torment for varying periods. Alfred Nzo spent 270 days

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alone in a tiny cell; Morris Motsemela endured solitary confinement for 345 days. (The Geneva Convention lays down 30 days as the maximum solitary confinement for prisoners of war.)

With each new political trial Cabinet Ministers and police chiefs declare that subversion in South Africa has now been brought to an end. The Rivonia trial was announced as the final blow against the liberation movement; since Rivonia, hundreds more have been and are, on trial throughout the country. More sensational trials are to come. A lawyer estimates there are now between ten and fifteen thousand children of political prisoners who are in need of assistance. These dependants, these trials, are the living evidence that apartheid cannot work. And torture is the terrible proof of the failure of Verwoerd's Nationalist government.

It took the Nationalists fifteen years to arrive at the stage where torture became the method used to destroy opposition to apartheid. It was not something that broke onto the South African scene overnight, like the gangsters of Hitler in 1933. It has been, rather, a slow but steady progression, springing logically but not swiftly from the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. This Act, which illegalised the Communist Party of South Africa, began a purge of trade unions and progressive organisations. It established a list of 'named' people (people named as Communists under the wide definitions of the Act, and including *statutory communists, i.e.,* people who have never been members of the Communist Party nor even supporters of communism, but having been convicted of some political offence under the Act, may then be listed as such and become subject to the various bans and restrictions).

The Act was designed to destroy the spearhead of opposition to apartheid and to silence its most determined opponents. Trade unions were stripped of their most experienced leaders: the Communist Party was driven underground. But in its purpose, the Suppression Act failed. Resistance grew: it was organised resistance, manifesting itself by 1953 in the Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws, when nearly 10,000 people went to jail for deliberately breaking various apartheid laws. New and more repressive laws ended this form of protest, but the African National Congress and allied organisations sought and found new ways of expressing their opposition to apartheid. In these years, even under stringent conditions, and in the face of individual victimisation and bannings, the peoples' organisations continued to grow in strength and support. 1955 was the year of the Congress of the People, the truly repre-

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sentative gathering that adopted the Freedom Charter as a programme for South Africa. This was followed by country-side raids, culminating in the arrest of 156 leading Congress supporters of all races, and the 4½-year long treason trial.

The trial immobilised the peoples' leaders and placed an enormous strain on the liberation movement as a whole, yet at the end of it, all the accused were acquitted and the Nationalists had failed to remove or silence those determined to organise against apartheid. While the treason trial was still in progress, the Sharpeville shootings, when 87 Africans were killed in cold blood by police fire, sparked off a wave of horror and world protest. As pass-burning, led by Chief Lutuli the A.N.C. president, swept the country, a state of emergency was declared and jail doors closed on thousands of political prisoners who were detained without trial for periods up to five months. By the time the emergency was lifted, the A.N.C. and P.A.C. (Pan-African Congress) were illegal; old forms of struggle were disappearing from the South African scene. It was no longer possible to hold meetings or demonstrations; there were, in any case, almost no individuals in the Congress or trade union movement who were permitted to speak or to belong to any organisations. Forms of opposition such as petitions and deputations were virtually outlawed.

Confronted with laws that had put a halt to all open and non-violent methods of protest, the Congress movement made one last attempt to oppose apartheid by peaceful means, and to demand human rights. This took the form of the All-in African Convention of 1961, which decided to call a stay-at-home strike in protest against the declaration of the Nationalist Republic in May 1961. To organise this strike the A.N.C. leader, Nelson Mandela, left home and family to live underground. The strike was partially successful. The mobilisation of police and armed forces turned the Republic celebrations into an operation designed to suppress the strike and destroy its leaders. But May 1961 was a turning point. Police action, bans and restrictions, raids on homes, political trials, the suppression of newspapers and magazines had finally destroyed all forms of protest and silenced political leaders. At the end of the year the first acts of sabotage took place; the struggle had entered a new and more deadly phase.

Sabotage produced government reaction: the Sabotage Act with its terrible 90-day law that virtually ends law. Some critics blamed sabotage for this law. But in truth the cause was continued resistance

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to apartheid, continued struggle for rights. This struggle throughout the years had focussed world attention on to South Africa. From the United Nations downwards, governments, international bodies and organisations, political parties and individuals condemned apartheid and endeavoured to isolate South Africa in the fields of culture, sport and trade. These international acts did not arise spontaneously through dislike of the racial policies but were in fact world response to South Africa's liberation struggle; a reflection of the tenacity, the ingenuity, the courage and the strength with which the people of South Africa had continued to fight, regardless of increasing police terror and near-fascism imposed on them.

Thus the 90-day law, with its awful consequences of systematic and legalised torture, of torture now used as an instrument of state policy, of torture connived at by the 'upholders' of the law (the police, the judiciary, the courts) has swept its destruction across the people of South Africa. It has put political leaders, men of mature understanding and outstanding personality such as Mandela, Sisulu, Kathrada and hundreds and hundreds of others into jail; in the penal Robben Island, in Rooi Hell in Port Elizabeth, in Leeukop and dozens of other prisons. It has sent some men to death. It has made heroes like Ngudle and Saloojee take their own lives to end the torture and stop them betraying their comrades. It has destroyed others, morally or physically. It has broken organisations of even moderate views, crushed the Liberal Party, disrupted students' organisations, invaded the Universities, and terrorised the people as a whole. It has produced an endless series of trials in which evidence of torture is ruled as inadmissible or having no bearing, and in which, with fists proudly raised in the Congress salute, giving a last defiant shout of 'Amandla! Ngwethu!' (Strength—it is ours!) the bravest and the best are sent to long years of incarceration, or to death.

But it is not enough for the rest of the world, watching from a distance, to condemn in resolution; or even to seek the exclusion of South Africa from various world bodies. For the use of torture as a political weapon, enforced through state policy, places a new responsibility on the rest of the world. It raises, in the clearest possible way, fundamental issues that strike at the very roots of mankind's existence and confronts humanity with the crisis of decision.

South Africa holds a mirror up to humanity. We look in the mirror and recoil in horror, for reflected there we see the image of a beast. The beast may be given a name—Goering, Eichman, Bal-

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Shazar Vorster, Captain Swanepoel—it is not important. For the beast is ourselves. We can turn away, like the German people did, like most whites in South Africa are doing, but by this act we strike ourselves down and can never again be completely whole.

Or we can set out to change the image in the mirror. In this we must act not as individuals but as part of society. Our trade unions, our political parties, our organisations of all types are the tools through which we improve and change our world. Boycotts, sanctions, mass action of all kinds must be pursued thoroughly, purposefully, successfully.

To do this, to join in world action against apartheid, is not simply an act of international brotherhood to assist political prisoners in South Africa's jails; it is part of mankind's long struggle to lift himself out of the primal swamps, and to shape a civilisation that permits the full flowering of the human spirit. These are the politics of torture in South Africa today. If we long to know happiness, it leaves us no choice.

LENIN ON CINEMA

Stan Forman

LENIN'S hitherto unpublished 'Directives on Cinematography' set out below, are to be included in Vol. 44 of the *Collected Works of Lenin*, which will appear in the near future. Written some forty-two years ago, they make fascinating reading, and many of his ideas have meaning and relevance to us today:

'Narkempres (People's Commissariat of Education-Translator) should organise supervision over all showings of films and should systematise this matter. All films shown in the R.S.F.S.R. should be registered and numbered in the Narkempres; and for every film programme a certain balance should be fixed:

(a) entertainment pictures, especially for advertising and for income (of course, without obscenity and counter-revolution), and

b) under the title "From the Life of the Peoples of All Countries"—pictures of special propaganda content, such as British colonial policy in India, the work of the League of Nations, the starving people of Berlin, and so on. Not only films should be shown, but

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also interesting propaganda photographs with appropriate captions. Make sure that privately-run cinemas yield sufficient revenue to the state in rent. Grant entrepreneurs the right to add items to their programme and to introduce new items, but only subject to censorship by Narkempres, and on condition that the balance between entertainment pictures and pictures of a propaganda nature under the titles "From the Life of the Peoples of All Countries" is maintained, so that manufacturers are interested in developing and producing new pictures. They should be given wide latitude within these limits. Pictures of a propaganda and educational character should be given to old Marxists and writers for checking, so that there is no repetition of the lamentable cases of propaganda accomplishing the opposite of what was intended, which has happened more than once. Attention should be focussed especially on the organisation of cinemas in villages and in the East where they are novelties and where our propaganda will therefore be especially successful.'

British cinemagoers today who suffer the shoddy second feature while waiting for the main film, will welcome Lenin's remarks on the need for balance in the composition of cinema programmes. His comments on obscenity are not untimely in London's West End (although counter-revolutionary cinema and television commercials are somewhat rare).

Lenin saw the film as an artistic, educational and political weapon of tremendous force—particularly in the backward rural areas and the then primitive Central Asian regions where the fight for literacy had yet to be won. As in every other field, he was internationalist in his approach to the cinema. His general title 'From the Life of All the Peoples of all Lands' as the theme for documentary supporting films could well be adapted to British needs. At the moment, our cinema owners' basic theme carries the banner 'From the Life of the Peoples of One Land—U.S.A.' Lenin showed foresight in his appreciation of the value of screening still photographs as well as films. It took four decades and television (a medium Lenin would have welcomed and enjoyed) to develop the filming of still photographs and period drawings to an art form. It is now possible to make exciting documentaries of events which had not or could not be covered by the movie camera. (Such programmes as Granada's 'The Boer War' or the Lena Goldfields Strike sequence from 'The Russian Miracle' are just two examples.)

In the tough year of 1922, Lenin realised the necessity of censorship—but he was flexible enough to insist that film makers have

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nough latitude and discretion to develop their own ideas. He wrote ust before the great Russian producers like Eisenstein and Pudovkin nade the silent film into an art form that out-distanced Hollywood nd astonished the world. His remarks on the 'lamentable cases of ropaganda accomplishing the opposite of what was intended' have las not lost their relevance to this day. Unfortunately there are still nany films of all kinds (particularly in the documentary field) pro- luced in the Socialist countries which, partly through inferior scripts, mperfectly spoken on technically poor sound tracks, accomplish little or nothing when exported to the capitalist world.

It is strange and wonderful! Here is a brief forty-two year old locument—virtually unknown—and it can help us all in the fight or better cinema and television.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

THE CAMPBELL CASE

It is a case of some political significance, and it is as well that the facts connected with it should be stated. . . . The articles appearing in the *Workers Weekly* . . . were inserted as a part of the Communist Party's anti-militarist campaign, on the tenth anniversary of the World War. These direct appeals to the fighting forces were natural and necessary parts of our effort to waken the working class—in and out of uniform—to a realisation of how war can in fact and practice be ended. . . . It is quite obvious that the case created disquiet amongst the Liberals and Tories. They realised that if such propa- ganda were permitted, the basis of the capitalist army could be gradually undermined. The *Manchester Guardian* published a ponderous article in which it talked about the army being a 'neutral body' which must be safe- guarded from political propaganda. What the *Manchester Guardian* really meant was that it must be safeguarded from working-class propaganda. There is no restriction on capitalist propaganda in the army. The whole atmosphere of military training is impregnated with that propaganda.

(From The Campbell Case, by J. R. Campbell, *Labour Monthly*, November 1924.)

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BOOK REVIEWS

A History of British Trade Unions since 1889. Vol. 1. 1889-1910

H. A. Clegg, Alan Fox, A. F. Thompson

Oxford University Press. 514 *pp.* 55*s.*

IF EVER THERE WAS a piece of Establishment historiography this is it. By Establishment I mean both the ruling circles in contemporary British class society and the ruling circles in our trade union movement. It is, as they say, no accident that this work has been hailed by Trades Union Congress chief, George Woodcock, in the ultra-Conservative and anti-Communist *Sunday Telegraph*. Mr. Woodcock opined that we have here 'unquestionably the best general history of trade unions that has yet been produced', which he contrasted with what he was pleased to call the 'very bad' *History of Trade Unionism* of Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

This is not the place to defend the Webbs' classic, on which generations of trade union militants have been nourished; the point is that the Webbs were Socialists, which gave shape and significance to their work on trade union history. The three Oxford historians who have collaborated in this present work for Nuffield College (with finance provided by the Leverhulme Trustees) obtrude no point of view that might embarrass a monopolistic society.

The importance of the period covered is, of course, immense. It runs from the dock strike of 1889 and the 'New Unionism', to the start of those tremendous years of struggle which were only terminated in the summer of 1914 by the outbreak of the first world war. And its great significance for the subsequent history of the movement is that it was the time when wha Lenin called the tragic divorce o Socialism and the trade union move ment in Britain was consummated

How was it that the revolutionary Socialist-founded 'new' unions lik the dockers (now Transport an General Workers Union) and ga workers (now National Union o General and Municipal Workers were transformed into citadels o right-wing reformism? The answe to this question will only come fron the labours of Socialist, particularly Marxist, historians; and Marxism i evidently anathema to our Oxfor trio. Marxist historians are only cited when they occupy academi positions (i.e. are members of th club—and most of these are very much ex-Marxist nowadays) or hav written official union histories. Other wise Marxist historians, like the lat Dona Torr or myself, are treated a untouchables; this appears to inhibi the authors from referring, for in stance, to the curious 1901 anti union campaign of *The Times* be cause the only detailed study is a pre-war paper of my own. Consider ing the care and frequency with which they cite esoteric unpublished Ph.D. theses, I find this distinctly comic.

The sheer documentation in thi book is certainly valuable. New in formation constantly emerges (fo the first time I have learnt somethin of the repercussions of the 'New Unionism' in the starchy ranks o the London Society of Compositors for example). But the authors show little interest in the fact that th history they record was the work o real, live working men and women They consider nothing human o concern to them; it is, after all, a traditional donnish attitude.

Those who already have a clear Socialist point of view on the de

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velopment of trade unionism will find this *History* a rich quarry; but a mass of carefully collected information like this does not itself bring any understanding of what trade unionism, past and present, is all about. Factual knowledge alone, in short, is far indeed from being all.

I find it noteworthy that, in their final chapter, the authors—putting 'working-class movement' in quotes—speak of a 'movement' as something which looks 'to the good of society as well as its own betterment'. Clearly inferred here is the negation of any class approach. I am quite sure that this supposedly 'non-class' attitude is the one that gratifies the Leverhulme Trustees.

ALLEN HUTT.

Economic Transition in Africa
Edited by Melville J. Horskovits and Mitchell Harwitz

Routledge and Kegan Paul 444 pp. 50*s*.

Africa and the United Nations
Thomas Hovet, Jr.
Faber. 336 pp. 52*s*. 6*d*.

Every year American universities get millions of dollars from Government sources, and generous grants from big monopolies, to undertake research into African economic problems and political developments. Among the most recent is one on 'economic transition' and another on Africa's impact on the United Nations.

The first is a collection of essays by no less than eighteen learned authors, nearly all university professors or economists and research workers. It has an enormous wealth of detailed facts on the various economies in Africa, low income levels and the extent of foreign investment and foreign 'aid'. Nearly everything is neatly documented—except the extent to which Africa's wealth is drained away as foreign monopoly profit, while Africans remain on starvation level.

The second is a most interesting account of the impact of the independent African states on discussions and decisions within the United Nations. Apart from one or two minor incursions into political controversy, it is a really objective study and invaluable as a reference book.

IDRIS COX.

The Rise of the South African Reich
Brian Bunting

Penguin African Library. 332 pp. 4*s*. 6*d*.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY ILLUMINATING and instructive book. Brian Bunting carefully documents the manner in which the neo-nazis of South Africa have risen from a fraction—even within Afrikaanerdom—to their ruthless grip on the entire state. His data cover, in short compass, every stage of the development and every aspect of social life. The movement was not classically fascist in its origin, in that it was not based, as was German fascism for example, on the most reactionary section of monopoly capitalism. But it has grasped popular support by the identical demagogy of racialism and divine mission, and is now taking over, or at least coming to terms with, big South African capital. It is a story which needs to be at least as well known as that of the rise of Hitler, and contains lessons made urgent and immediate by the phenomenon of Goldwater and the racialism and Munichism making the running in Tory ranks today.

I.M.

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PRACTICAL STEPS

AS one fight ends, another begins. A sober assessment of the Election aftermath leaves no doubt that rigorous struggles will be needed to ensure that socialist principles are put into practice.

The left wing of the labour movement will need the solid backing of every progressive ally, and will surely welcome the help of a journal like *Labour Monthly,* both for ideological arguments and as a platform to ventilate its views. An added asset at this time is our pamphlet *The Rise and Fall of the Daily Herald* a little history that should be closely studied at the start of another Labour Government.

Many readers have been quick to size up the possibilities. 'As a socialist deeply concerned with the future of the left-wing press', writes a new subscriber, 'I found this pamphlet an eye-opener. Every Labour M.P. should be made to read it!' A Scottish miner's trade union branch doubled its first order of three dozen and sold out at once.

A young Sussex reader says, 'I started reading *L.M.* when I was in the sixth form at school and found it a great help when we discussed world problems in the Current Affairs lesson. I want to thank you for the guidance I have received and will receive in discussions at University'. From Yorkshire a good friend writes: 'I appeal to every reader to interest at least one other person in this superb little journal. It contains a wealth of information and political punch found nowhere else and is written by honest men for people who want the truth'. This idea in practice would be a weapon in the fight for socialism.

Helen Falber.

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